

# Advocacy Newsletter

Issue No 8 October 2024

## Advocacy News

### HOPE Project



#### HOPE Independent Volunteer Advocacy

Supporting you to be informed, heard and involved



Someone there for you and only you

Someone to listen to you and support you so you can make your own decisions

Someone to help you access and understand information and make informed choices

Someone to represent you if you need them to

Someone to help you be heard

#### HOPE Independent Volunteer Advocacy

HOPE's (Helping others participate and engage) trained Independent Volunteer Advocates will listen and support you to say what matters to you.

Our advocacy service is independent of other services and agencies. It's free of charge for anyone who is aged 50+, or a carer of an older person.

#### What can my advocate do?

Your advocate will help you to:

- Ensure people listen to your views, wishes and feelings so you lead the decision making
- Find the right support you need when you need it
- Be supported to say what matters to you and why
- Understand information about services or your rights
- Understand your options and choices
- Empower you to help yourself in the future and to ultimately self-advocate.

"My advocate made me feel confident to speak up for myself. They were by my side, taking my side and making sure I was able to get my opinion not just listened to, but really heard".

#### What can't your advocate do?

HOPE's Independent Volunteer Advocates provide early intervention, pre-crisis support. They can't help with:

- Complex health care and social care situations, such as hospital discharge, care and support planning and assessments
- Supporting people who lack capacity. Our Dementia Advocacy Project can help with this
- Giving advice of any kind. Advocates support you to make your own decisions
- Processing benefits claims, giving benefits advice, or attending tribunals
- Financial planning, giving financial advice, handling money or shopping
- Befriending, counselling or mediation
- Legal advocacy or acting as an executor of a will.

#### About the service

The work we do with you is confidential. That means we'll always talk to you before discussing your information with anyone else.

We'll keep your information safe and you have the right to see your own records. We'll support you to have access to them if you wish.

If you feel you're at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, we can look at ways to help you feel safe.

We welcome all feedback about our service. If you have any comments, compliments, or complaints about the service you have received please email

[advocacy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@agecymru.org.uk)

"My advocate was the only person who listened to me and only me, who understood everything I said and helped me to find my way forward".



More information can be found at [www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy)

If you think that HOPE can support you, please e-mail [advocacy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@agecymru.org.uk) or call 029 2043 1555

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### Link to [HOPE Leaflet](#)

HOPE is a partnership project with local Age Cymru partners and Age Connects and supports people to engage, participate, gain information, have their voices heard, understand their rights, make choices, be involved, share experiences, raise awareness of advocacy, and develop skills and knowledge.

HOPE delivers independent advocacy support at a community level through a range of advocacy models by recruiting and then fully training and supporting project volunteers. HOPE supports people at an early stage in their issues or concerns to prevent them slipping into crisis.

HOPE delivers independent advocacy for older people (50+) and their carers across Wales. HOPE staff and volunteers also engage with communities who can guide us to make sure the service we provide is right for the needs of older people and carers in their areas. We don't want to duplicate existing services but rather we want to make sure we work with and complement the existing advocacy providers and forums across Wales.

HOPE has established a programme of training, workshops and events enabling advocates across Wales to further develop their skills and knowledge. Training and workshops are available to other professionals who would benefit from greater awareness of advocacy and how to access it.

For more information please contact [advocacy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@agecymru.org.uk)

## Dementia Advocacy Project

We're delighted to announce that the Age Cymru Dementia Advocacy Project, funded by Welsh Government and hosted by Aneurin Bevan Regional Partnership Board, have an extension to our funding for a further 18 months until the end of March 2026.

### [Dementia Advocacy Project Brochure](#)



Our independent dementia advocacy project is about enabling people with a diagnosis of dementia to access the services and support that they need and to have a voice in decisions that are being made. It's also to support them through situations where they may be abused and need to find safeguarding solutions. The advocacy we offer is independent of any other service people living with dementia use. This means the person with dementia will be at the heart of the decision making process, and

[www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy)  
[dementiaadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:dementiaadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk)  
029 2043 1555



we can support and represent them without any conflict of interest. For more information or to make a referral please email [dementiaadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:dementiaadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk)

## Advocacy Network

A range of regional advocacy provider networks have been developed across Wales to complement the work of the National Network for Adults Advocacy in Wales. The networks are an opportunity for services who currently provide advocacy, and those who would like to in the future, to get a better understanding of the current situation in the region, potential future commissioning opportunities and to have space to network and share information and ideas.

Below are the details of the next round of advocacy network meetings which will take place via Zoom or Teams

National Network for Adults Advocacy  
12.12.24 10-12

Gwent  
14.1.25 10-12

North Wales  
8.10.24 2-3.30  
21.1.25 2-3.30

Neath Port Talbot and Swansea  
15.1.25 1-2.30

3 Counties in West Wales  
7.1.25 10-12

Powys  
8.10.24 11-12.30  
8.1.25 11-12.30

Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
10.10.24 10-11.30  
16.1.25 10-11.30

Cardiff and Vale  
To be confirmed

# Advocacy Counts 9

A review of advocacy services for adults in Wales with a particular focus on older people



2024

Over the last 18 years Age Cymru has been reviewing availability of services, issues around funding and sustainability, quality of service and training of advocates, advocacy and its role in safeguarding, accessibility in terms of language and knowledge and understanding of legislative changes in advocacy.

Advocacy Counts 9 is the latest report in a biennial series of surveys conducted by Age Cymru on behalf of the advocacy sector in Wales. It provides an updated snapshot of advocacy provision in Wales for adults, with a particular emphasis on older people.

The overall numbers of people supported, paid advocates and services funded to deliver advocacy across Wales have all decreased since the last survey was reported in 2022. There has been a small increase in the number of advocacy services specifically for older people and a significant increase in the number of volunteer advocates working in a variety of advocacy services across Wales.

Analysis of the survey responses was enhanced by follow-up interviews with some respondents, along with discussions at advocacy network meetings across Wales. These revealed that many of the reductions in provision are because of real terms funding reductions. These reductions are reported to have resulted from the

continued lack of Welsh Government funding for commissioning independent professional advocacy (IPA), in contrast to the funding provided to commission the other statutory forms of advocacy, and restrictions to the budgets offered by statutory commissioners. Often, funding is uncertain and short-term, with one year funding extensions offered at the last minute.

As anticipated during previous Advocacy Counts surveys, the fulfillment of statutory requirements for advocacy commissioning has diverted funding away from other forms of lower level, preventative, community-based advocacy, resulting in a reduced range of these services and some organisations ceasing to exist or offer advocacy.

With the cost-of-living crisis impacting on many people across Wales, increases in the numbers and complexity of referrals have put more pressure on advocacy services at a time when the majority have reduced finances, services and advocates. A significant and exponential increase in parental advocacy cases and a reduction in the range and number of other support services to signpost people to has also increased the pressure on advocacy services. The overall increased demand and complexity of cases has resulted in fewer people being able to be supported and many organisations implementing waiting lists for the first time.

The cost-of-living crisis and high levels of inflation have also impacted personally on many advocates. These challenges have been exacerbated by the lack of increases in advocates' salaries, which are generally perceived to be lower than those of similarly skilled and qualified professions. The increased complexity of casework has put more pressure on advocates. For many organisations it has therefore become increasingly challenging to retain and recruit advocates.

Despite these challenges advocates across Wales continue to strive to offer the best support possible to people seeking help to understand their rights and have their voice heard.

The full report and also previous Advocacy Counts reports can be found here:

[Age Cymru | Advocacy Counts \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://ageuk.org.uk)

## Advocacy Commissioning and Guidance

There are currently lots of advocacy strategy discussions taking place leading to commissioning, and the link below gives access to the Commissioning Guidance and Toolkit for information

Commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for Adults  
under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

# A Framework and Toolkit



[Advocacy Commissioning Guidance and Toolkit](#)

## Advocacy Awareness Week



Advocacy Awareness Week is from  
**14-18 October 2024.**

Each year it brings the advocacy sector together to highlight a different theme. This year is about the impact of advocacy and will focus on the storytelling. People will be sharing things like blog posts and videos online to celebrate advocacy and how advocacy can help people. Each day we'll talk about how advocacy has helped people and why advocacy is important.

Download the logos and resources to help share your stories and raise awareness about what Advocacy is doing in your communities and organisation.

[Advocacy Awareness Week, Theme, Logos and Resources 2024](#)

## The Welsh adult advocacy sector “Big Event” 2024

The HOPE Project are looking forward to welcoming the Welsh adult advocacy sector to the “Advocacy Big Event” for the fifth year running.

These online events will provide fantastic learning and development opportunities, some fun, and time to connect and share your experiences with other advocates from across Wales.

The first two sessions, following Advocacy Awareness week, will be exploring the theme “Impact and Outcomes”, celebrating the power and impact of our advocacy work on people’s lives. We have fantastic guest speakers lined up and will include capturing the impact of advocacy through telling stories.

The second week of the “Advocacy Big Event” will be running in conjunction with Adult Safeguarding week and as we’ve done for the previous years, we’ll be ending on focusing on our own wellbeing and some fun. More details to follow.

Full details will be released soon, with our guest speakers details and further information.

If you have any queries, please email Kath Hawkins, Training Officer, HOPE Project, at

[katherine.hawkins@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:katherine.hawkins@agecymru.org.uk)

## NDTI Quality Performance Mark



Recognising quality  
in independent advocacy

an  NDTI Programme

The QPM is a quality assurance assessment for providers of independent advocacy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is based on the principles contained in the Advocacy Charter and the Advocacy Code of Practice, enabling providers to demonstrate how they’re meeting the different standards.

The QPM has been reviewed and re-launched following consultation with advocacy providers, national stakeholders and commissioners. This, the 4th edition of the QPM which was formally launched in May 2018.

It has been updated to reflect changes in both practice and legislation as well aiming to ensure its continued effectiveness in supporting a diverse advocacy sector deliver high quality independent advocacy provision.

The Assessment Process has been streamlined to reduce the administrative burden whilst maintaining the robust and rigorous approach of previous versions.

The QPM is available to providers of statutory and non-statutory independent advocacy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It does’t cover Scotland. To find out more about the QPM please visit our dedicated website at:

[www.qualityadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.qualityadvocacy.org.uk)

In addition, the QPM team produce a regular newsletter with the latest news and views in the advocacy sector. To sign up to receive this please contact:

[support@qualityadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:support@qualityadvocacy.org.uk)

You can [complete a Pre-Assessment Questionnaire here](#)

## NDTI - Advocacy Charter

Since its launch in 2002, The Advocacy Charter has been widely accepted throughout England and Wales as a document that defines and promotes key advocacy principles.

Following conversations within the advocacy sector, The Advocacy Charter has been updated to reflect changes in legislation and policy.

Click the links below to download the new PDF versions.

[The Advocacy Charter A3 Poster for Display](#)

[The Easy Read Advocacy Charter Poster](#)

# The Advocacy Charter

for Advocacy Providers

Advocacy helps you to have your say in what happens in your life.  
Advocacy is supporting you in speaking out about your rights, what you need and what is important to you.

- Clarity of Purpose**  
This means we will be clear and honest about what we can and cannot do for you.
- Independence**  
We are separate from other services and will help you ask for things that are important to you.
- Confidentiality**  
We will keep information about you private and safe. If we need to share information, to keep you or other people safe, we will try to talk to you first.
- Person Led**  
We will ask you what you want to happen, and give you information to make choices.
- Empowerment**  
We will help you to speak up for yourself.
- Equality and Diversity**  
We will treat all people fairly and with respect and make sure other people do too. We will make sure you get the support you need to have an advocate and will change things for you if you need us to. We will make sure other people treat you fairly and with respect.
- Accessibility**  
Our services are free. We will use words you can understand. We will make sure you can see your advocate in a place that is good for you.
- Accountability**  
We will check what we do for you, and ask you what you think.
- Safeguarding**  
We will make sure advocates know about your rights and how to help you stay safe.
- Supporting Advocates**  
We will help and support advocates to be good at their job. That way they can help you to speak out.

The Advocacy Charter v4.1 May 2018 is updated and published by NDTI. Developed in partnership with members of Pembrokeshire People First



## Advocacy Services in Wales

The Regional Advocacy networks across Wales have mapped the various types of advocacy provision in their areas. Details about the advocacy services available in each local authority area in Wales can be found here:

[Age Cymru | Advocacy services in Wales \(ageuk.org.uk\)](#)

## Age Cymru Advice

Age Cymru's advice line can provide free, impartial advice on a range of subjects.

Perhaps they may want advice about how much they should be paying for a loved ones care? Or perhaps they may want to know if they're eligible for Pension Credit and want help with claiming it?

Age Cymru Advice can help with all these issues, and more – call us today

**0300 303 44 98**

Contact us...

- To subscribe to the e-bulletin or newsletter
- If you have any comments or questions about the articles
- If there's anything you'd like to see in the next e-bulletin or newsletter

Email: [sue.vaarkamp@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:sue.vaarkamp@agecymru.org.uk)

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Registered charity number: 1128436  
Registered company number: 6837284

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